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✠ The REDEEMED
LIFE AFTER DEATH

CHARLES CUTHBERT HALL

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*THE REDEEMED
LIFE AFTER DEATH*

The Redeemed Life After Death

CHARLES CUTHBERT HALL.



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*To
The Sacred Memory
of
My Father and My Mother*

*Et audiui vocem de cœlo dicentem mihi :
Scribe : Beati mortui, qui in Domino
moriuntur. Amodo jam dicit Spir-
itus, ut requiescant a laboribus suis :
opera enim illorum sequuntur illos.*

*THE REDEEMED
LIFE AFTER DEATH*

I am the Resurrection and the Life ; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live ; And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.—*St. John* 11 : 25, 26.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Which according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven.—1 *Peter* 1 : 3, 4.

In My Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.—*St. John* 14 : 2, 3.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.—1 *Corinthians* 2 : 9.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.—1 *Corinthians* 15 : 53, 54.

Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ ; which is far better.—*Philippians* 1 : 23.

IN the quiet yard of what is called the oldest Church in England, the Church of St. Martin, of Canterbury—among immemorial yews that may have seen Anselm called from his Norman monastery and forced into the English Archbishopric—lies the writer of the hymn, “Ten thousand times ten thousand”—Henry Alford, Dean of Canterbury Cathedral. Upon the stone that marks his grave, written in melodious Latin composed by himself, is this inscription: *Deversorium Viatoris Hierosolymam proficiscentis*, “The Inn of a Traveller on his way to Jerusalem.” It might be written on every grave, where, from the first century

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onward, believers in the faith of Christ have laid their dead who have fallen asleep in Him. There have been many differences touching other things, but those differences have not invaded the circle of peace that surrounds the Christian grave. We may differ about the opinions and acts of the living, but an unvarying belief of twenty centuries unites us, concerning the destiny of the blessed dead. Over the whole course of Christian history, redeeming from despair its lowest depressions, tempering its greatest exaltations with the serious splendour of immortality, rests a confidence that Death is not the end of personal existence; that, when the shadows of the eventide close in about the pilgrim, he lies down, as in a traveller's rest-

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house, to awake refreshed and to put on the vestments of a new and more beautiful life.

One cannot too strongly emphasise the fact that belief in the continuance of life after death is far from being peculiar to Christianity. If it were peculiar to Christianity, its authority and its consolation as a belief might be much less than they are. Death is definite, obvious, apparently final in its action upon the individual. The conception of life going on after this ruin of death has taken place is startling and opposed to the law of probability, as set up by what the hand touches and what the eye rests upon, of the dead. The doubting of immortality is a familiar accompaniment of hours of sorrow and

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hours of pleasure. If belief in the ongoing of life beyond the grave were confined to that part of the human race holding the Christian tradition, it may be that that belief would be submerged, yet more often than it is, by tidal waves of materialistic philosophy. But it is not so. Christians are not the only believers in life after death. Ages before the dawn of Christianity, the river of this belief, brimming with the hopes and fears of human hearts, ran, like the fourfold river of Eden, through four ancient channels of the religious experience of our race, the faiths of Egypt, of Babylonia, of Persia, of India. Two thousand years before the Hebrew Exodus, the Egyptian Book of the Dead was penetrating

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that gentle and poetic civilisation with the atmosphere of immortality. A thousand years before the Psalter of Israel, the Accadian hymns of Chaldæa were voicing the same elemental belief for the Babylonian progenitors of the Hebrew people. Half a millennium before Christ, in the Asiatic Empire between the Caspian and the Persian Gulf, the Zoroastrian Avesta was proclaiming with singular clearness and decision the Parsi faith of life advancing after death to its judgment and its doom. When the Hindu Aryans swept through the passes of Afghanistan to the plains of the Indus and the Ganges, they brought with them pre-historic hymns breathing the hope of immortality and telling of an

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“everlasting and imperishable world, where there is eternal light and glory.”¹ “The idea of immortality,” one has said, “was the common property of all Indian philosophers. It was so completely taken for granted that we look in vain for any elaborate arguments in support of it.”²

The assurance of life after death is not more evident in this fourfold stream of the world's most ancient religious experience than in those two faiths more nearly associated with Christianity: the religion of Greece and the religion of Israel. The former advances beyond the intuitive sense of immortality to reason with confidence concerning the after-life of

¹ Rig Veda viii : 48.

² Max Muller : *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p. 138.

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the soul ; the latter, rising to a moral doctrine of God, of man and of death, progressively is filled with promise of the coming faith of Christianity. "By slow degrees," it has been said of the Old Testament doctrine of a future life,¹ "it grew from little to more, from surmise to certainty, from obscurity to clearness."

Through these reflections we are reminded that belief in the continuance of life after death is far from being peculiar to Christianity. It is no new thought that breaks in upon a race accustomed by its religious inheritances to think of life as limited to this world ; of death as the end of all. Nor is the Christian belief a

¹Salmond : *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 192, 2nd edition.

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spasmodic outburst, flaring up like a failing fire, from the embers of an expiring faith. The opposite is true. The belief that we cherish concerning the redeemed life after death has back of it and beneath it the conviction of all the ages since man became a living and a reasoning soul ; a conviction born of what he found in himself, of what he saw in others. With the same precision and security with which man in all ages has claimed, by a physical sense, a relation between the eye and light, has he, by a spiritual sense, claimed a relation between the soul and immortality.

The nature of that relation he could not grasp ; the depths of that mystery of immortality he could not fathom ; but in the fact he believed, in the sense

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of destiny he lived and died. His reasonings concerning it were vague, and dark and full of fear. To the Hindu the discharge of the soul at death may have been as the weariness of the wild bird of the sea, wandering above the pathless billows of transmigration, seeking through millions of years and millions of reincarnations final rest in the ocean of an Impersonal Absolute. To the Hebrew the going forth from the body may have been to enter a pallid and shadowy underworld—a house of gloomy and indiscriminate assemblage appointed for all the living. But to the one as to the other, the obscuration of the vision made it not less a vision of life and the continuance of being, as against death and the annihilation of being.

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The Revelation of Jesus Christ is the confirmation of this universal assumption of immortality ; the interpretation of this universal sense of destiny ; the Key of Death. "God hath saved us," says St. Paul, "and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began ; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished Death and hath brought life and immortality to light." In our quiet hours, it is well to reflect upon the confirming and interpreting of our sense of immortality through the Christian Revelation ; to take the Key of Death, as from His Hand, and open

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a door of thought into that blessed Life that lies beyond. "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers." The moment we open that door we are tempted to draw back and to turn away our eyes; confused, if not terrified, by the mysteries that envelope the future. As soon as we assume the certainty of life beyond death we open questions that we cannot answer; we unveil possibilities that we cannot limit. That this is so, ought not in the least to surprise us, much less to deprive us of our peace. How could it be otherwise with a life which we view from afar, and of which we have not yet had experience! When one remembers how little, relatively, we know

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about our present life, how many of its phenomena baffle investigation, how many of its forces are incalculable, how ignorant we remain in this wonderful world, is it strange if, looking forward into another, and catching only dim and evanescent glimpses, we are uncertain about many things? Is it strange if at times we shrink with fear from the thought of leaving the familiar world for such a *terra incognita*? We have grown used to the kindly earth and its ways. Is it strange if it frightens us sometimes to think of going away from it all forever—the pine-trees and the hills, the firesides and the faces that smile and speak? It is, of course, a poetic materialism that runs through Frederick Faber's lines on "The Shore of

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Eternity," yet we have all felt, or may some day feel, that of which he speaks :

Alone ! to land alone upon that shore !
On which no wavelets lisp, no billows roar,
Perhaps no shape of ground,
Perhaps no sight or sound,
No forms of earth our fancies to arrange,
But to begin alone that mighty change !

Alone ! to land alone upon that shore !
Knowing so well we can return no more ;
No voice or face of friend,
None with us to attend
Our disembarking on that awful strand,
But to arrive alone in such a land !

There are moments when the mystery of it all is overwhelming. But this natural and childlike shrinking from that which we do not understand, is not the only influence that makes it hard for us sometimes to see the fair, sweet landscape of immortality that lies beyond the tumultuous

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clouds of mystery. The Church has always been debating matters connected with that future life upon which it is beyond the power of man to pronounce a final decision: the doom of those who never repent, the fate of the ignorant, the destiny of religious souls outside of Christianity, the salvation of infants, the purgatorial discipline, the intermediate state, conditional immortality, probation after death, the Second Coming of Christ, the judgment of mankind, the closing of the affairs of the world. These awful matters have furnished material for controversies and have been made the subjects of antagonistic dogmas. Around them have gathered masses of rival opinions, in turn claiming and yielding authority as

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final interpretations of Scripture. It was inevitable, in view of the inherent interest in immortality, that these problems of the future life should press for solution. It was equally inevitable that dogmatic attempts to solve them should add to the confusion of Christendom. It is blessed to feel that while, as thoughtful students of Scripture and of life, each one of us must hold for himself such opinions touching these deep matters as, for him, the Word and the Spirit shall appear to justify, we may, at times, let all these things go, turn from all these clouds of mystery and look on that peaceful landscape of the redeemed life after death, which, to the eye of Christian faith and hope, sometimes stands forth in such sunny out-

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line, that it seems not like a distant, unsubstantial vision, but like that which really it is, the continuance of an eternity that begins here, in time. I say, the continuance of an eternity that begins in time. This thought is the very gateway through which the mind of Christian faith moves naturally towards that peaceful consummation of the redeemed life after death. To apprehend the life that is to be we must learn to think more largely and sacredly of the life that is now. We must enlarge the scope and measure of To-day ; must identify To-day with what we call Eternity. To bring this thought within our reach was one great purpose of the Revelation of the Lord Jesus. " I am come that they might have life and that they

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might have it more abundantly." "I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." "Because I live ye shall live also." This is the Gospel of the Resurrection—the passage of the Lord from His daily life before death through the grave to His joyful Resurrection and His Life after death. This is the note of power in the preaching of the first days—that the Lord had risen, and that with His Resurrection had come a confirmation and interpretation of that sense of the soul's survival of death which Egypt and Babylonia, and Persia and the Aryans of the Hindu Kush, and Greeks and Jews had been affirming

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in their own grand, vague ways for thousands of years. Some are saying in these latter days that the historical evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus is slight and the witnesses are few. What if it were so? Is the only evidence of the Resurrection of Christ the testimony of the eye-witnesses? Is it not also the power that burst like an avalanche after the fact? I believe with Harnack : " Whatever may have happened at that grave, one thing is certain, that grave is the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished ; that there is life eternal. Wherever there is a strong faith in the infinite value of the soul, wherever the sufferings of the present are measured against a future of glory, this feeling of life is bound up with

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the conviction that Jesus Christ has passed through death, that God has awakened Him to life and glory. It is not by any speculative ideas of philosophy, but by the Vision of Jesus' Life and Death and by the feeling of His imperishable union with God that mankind, so far as it believes in these things, has attained to that certainty of eternal life it was meant to know and which it dimly discerns ; eternal life in time and beyond time."¹ Eternal life in time. To-day a part of eternity. Here is the beginning of the Christian conception of the redeemed life. "He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, is passed from death unto life." The present

¹ *What is Christianity?* p. 162,

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life is the eternal life, seen for the time being through the mode of the physical. Death is the suspension of relations with the physical universe. Life, which was eternal here, goes on, undeterred and undissolved by the suspension of these physical relations. This is the power of an endless, an indissoluble life—a life that cannot be dissolved. The mode of existence may change, relations may be suspended; mourners may go about the streets; the dust may return to the earth as it was; but the spirit which came out from God, which is akin to God, returns to God, Who gave it: lives with God.

There are reasons why, to a well balanced mind, this matter is one of the most intensely interesting things

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in the whole field of thought. Its great interest comes largely from its real relation to ourselves and to those we love. There are many questions, important and interesting in themselves, which have only a possible, or provisional or occasional relation to us. We may become involved in them or we may not. We may take them up for a season, pursue them, drop them, and take up other interests in their turn. But in this matter we are certainly involved; more than this: this matter contains, and is, our future experience; what we are to pass through, to feel, to know, to do, to be. What is more real to us than our own life to-day! *This* is our own life to-morrow. It is a wise ordering, no doubt, that the

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sense of our real relation to a life after death comes to us gradually. In the days of our childhood and of our youth some do not think at all of that life in the future ; the present world is so new, so full of surprises, so interesting by reason of new sensations. There is something of the same affluent sense of good and beautiful things in store, that are about to be opened up, with which we begin an evening of noble music, and think ahead no farther than the melody has gone. There are others, many, I believe, who, even in childhood and youth, think long, long thoughts that rise, as with wings, into the infinite spaces ; that prophesy, as with voices, of that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard.

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But to very few are these prophetic intimations of immortality absolutely real in childhood, in youth, or even in early manhood and womanhood. They are flashing visions that add to the grandeur, the sacredness, the pathos of living; they are involuntary and unorganised effects of religious emotion and the awaking of the soul to the knowledge of God. They are genuine, yet academic; sincere, yet with the sincerity of poetic imagination rather than the prose of the sober fact. The child's eyes may fill with tears at the vision of immortality. In an hour, thank God! the sweet laughter and the crowding interests of time have swept that vision away.

At length there comes gradually,

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in the well-balanced mind, a change from the academic to the actual. It dawns upon one that a large part of the life is over, which once, from the standpoint of childhood, seemed a road without an ending; that the sense of indefinite opportunity has changed into the problem how to do in the time remaining some definite things that wait to be done. For some the acuteness of this problem is heightened by the growing limitations that come to them with age and waning vitality. The mysterious words of Christ to Simon Peter they begin, half wonderingly, to apply to themselves: "Verily, verily I say unto thee, When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest, but when thou shalt

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be old thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." When one begins to feel these things, it is a sign that he is taking hold of the realism of life after death. As one who has heard, all his life, of India, vaguely visualising it to himself as a continent of mystery, far away, and who finds himself at last upon a ship standing in to that land, fringed with its palm-bearing atolls, so at length the vagueness of the sense of immortality gives place to distinct impressions of advance toward that which must, within a time relatively short, become a part of one's own experience. To such as have had vital energy reduced to a minimum, and courage undermined, by tortur-

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ing years of illness ; or who, alienated through adversity, have broken their connection with outward affairs, have lost touch with active life and retired into the seclusion of melancholy thoughts, one can imagine that the prospect of death as leading to a complete change of the mode of existence may be accepted with somewhat more than passive willingness, as a release from the monotony of pain and disappointment. But for those whose career in the world has been marked by relative progress and achievement, who are living lives of service to which the interests of humanity appeal strongly, who find each year more interesting than the last, as the world wakes up to movements of science and civilisation and religion that point to

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golden ages of liberty and social redemption—for such as these it is hard to be reconciled to any change that means separation from forces and friends so dear; elimination from movements bound up with that which is the very life of one's life. Yet this hardship can be mitigated, this pain of renunciation can be soothed if there be the light of reasonable hope shining upon that future, so that we shall see its connection with the life that we live here; its advance to something greater and more interesting than this which to us is so great and so nobly interesting. What we want is the sense of relation to that future; relation in some manner that shall conserve the essence of life in us, and not consign us to the

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miserable silence and unprofitableness of Death. Is it not true that this matter comes very near to us ; near with the vital nearness of a personal experience !

Not less near to us is it as involving those whom we love. In the highest affections of this life, love becomes a kind of earthly transmigration of the soul. We live in those most dear to us, sometimes far more than we live within ourselves. Our chief thoughts are immersed in them. What they are, what they do, what they may become are the things that engage us most. In them we seem to find another and a better self. From them proceed to us silent influences that augment the blessedness of living. Undoubtedly there are some natures

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that know relatively little of this absorption in the lives of others ; not, it may be, because incapable of such knowledge, but because circumstances did not lend themselves to its development. Apparently the roots of personal affection lie nearer the surface in some hearts than in others, and the uprooting of earthly relationships by death does not carry with it so much of the heart's fibre, for some. There are others to whom life means love ; to whom the thought of the mysterious future that lies before our beloved is more real than our own. When they are with us in the joy of health, sometimes we search their dear faces with our eyes and wonder concerning all that lies before them, whether they shall enter early or late into that great

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experience, and how they shall adapt themselves to it. Here they seem a part of ourselves, they seem to us sometimes like the interpretation and answer of that deepest life that lies buried in our own soul. Our love would protect them from every adversity; but from that last adversity of Death we cannot protect them. Into it and through it they must go, and we, also, thank God, must go and may be with them afterwards, and they with us. But what shall it all mean : to them and to us ?

Think ! when our one soul understands

The great word that makes all things new ;
When earth breaks up and heaven expands

How will the change strike me and you
In the House not made with hands ?

Day by day, as we grow older, we

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have to see the great transition accomplished by one and another of our friends. To-day they are by our side, working, with us, at the fascinating work of living, answering with flash of eye, and tone of voice, and touch of hand their environment in a physical universe—they are well; to-morrow this perfect correspondence of health is invaded; the eye dims with weakness, the voice sinks to a whisper, the hand grows passive—they are sick. The third day all is still; every relation with the material universe is suspended—they are dead.

What does it all mean? What shall we believe concerning them that are asleep in Him? No negative answer need be given by him who holds the essence of the Christian faith; no

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cautious, indeterminate balancing of possibilities. From that joyous age when "with great power the Apostles gave witness to the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all," an extraordinary unity of belief has pervaded Christian thought concerning the redeemed life after death. It has been a distinctive faith, standing forth in positiveness and beauty of outline against the background of many forms of non-Christian theory. In that confused background of non-Christian theory, touching the state after death, one finds the blank and horrifying denial of immortality by an animalistic materialism; a denial which, it must be remembered, is simply another belief: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we

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die." It is the attempt to blot out the visions of life that flit across the imagination, by putting man in his death with the beasts that perish. One finds also the effort, as in the pathetic volume of Cotter Morison,¹ to substitute for our personal life after death the survival of our influence in this world, as a contribution to the common experience of the race ; " robbing the individual of his immortality to enrich the abstraction called humanity." ² One finds, in many forms, the reflex action of Orientalism on Western thought, in beliefs touching the absorption of the individual soul in the soul of the universe, as the wave is lost in the sea.

Against the shadows of this shifting

¹ *The Service of Man.*

² Salmond, *op. cit.* p. 583.

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background, Christ has brought life and immortality to light. That holy hope, which, tested by twenty centuries of Christian experience, is to-day more real, more full, more adequate than ever, we owe to Him Who said: "If it were not so, I would have told you." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," says one of those who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead, "Which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." It is through that living hope that Christ has relieved our life of an intolerable

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burden ; has opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Carlyle speaks of his beloved friend John Sterling, dying at thirty-eight, as a brave man "looking steadfastly into the silent continents of Death and Eternity" ; and Sterling, a few days before his death, writing to Carlyle, shows how, to one who has found the solution of his spiritual problem in Christ, it is possible, even in the midst of one's best days, to lay down these beautiful affairs of earth and to feel a human interest in the life to come : "I tread the common road," he says, "into the great darkness, without any thought of fear, and with very much of hope. It is all very strange, but not one hundredth part so sad as it seems to the standers-by."

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When one thinks of the largeness of this matter and of the many types of mind interested in it over so great a stretch of time, one sees that inevitably there must be variations in the detail of the Christian belief concerning the blessed life after death. Such variations we find; as, for example, in matters touching the Intermediate State and the Second Coming of our Blessed Lord—matters of which it is not possible for me to speak here. These natural variations, however, only make more impressive the glorious unities of the belief coming down to us unbroken from Christ; lending themselves to the progressive thinking of each successive age and becoming to-day, when interpreted in the terms of modern knowledge of

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the problems of life, more inspiring than ever. Essentially these unities of our faith concerning the blessed life after death are three in number: the continuance of personal identity; the progress of the soul; the resurrection of the body.

The continuance of personal identity after death is one of the splendid elements of this belief. "Handle Me and see," says the Risen Christ, "that it is *I* Myself." As the rainbow glows against the sullen clouds, so does this rich hope of the persistence of personal life stand out in contrast with the dark alternatives of annihilation at death, or absorption after death into the impersonal soul of the universe. The individualising of lives is God's most wonderful miracle of being:

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each life a unique expression of attributes coming forth from Himself, and standing apart from all other lives in the inimitable atmosphere of its own personality. How extraordinarily real is the place of an individual life in the world and in our heart: not to be mistaken for, or confused with, any other, but only, always, everywhere himself, herself!

How mysterious and how absolute is the correspondence of personalities one with another! Out of the indistinguishable throngs of human lives emerge one and another who are to us as the special messengers of God, to have come in contact with whom is to have received influences that must continue to affect us while our being lasts. This is the ministration

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of personality, at once the most real and the most spiritual of facts; the most actual and the most elusive. How wonderful it is to reflect upon the influence of one radiant personality, in a home, in a community, in the world! Year after year it abides among us, coming to us day after day, or returning to us after long intervals in its own beautiful uniqueness; a bright fact in our universe, a continuous force affecting our consciousness of being, a living epistle unfolding the beauty of God. We try to interpret this miracle of personality; we cannot. We ask it to give account of its secret of power: its only answer is: "It is *I* myself." It is this of which our Christian faith affirms immortal continuance. It is this that shall

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shine as the stars forever and ever. The catastrophe of death has come between us and this personality for a season, suspending its power to have relations with us through the medium of the physical universe in which we still live and act; but over the essential self of personality, over that unique blending of attributes through which God expressed His thought in forming this beautiful personal essence, death hath no more dominion. In the persistence of an indissoluble life it lives—itsself forever.

But *how* does that Self live on in the life after death? Is that world but as the pallid Sheol of the Hebrew imagination, where gathered the ghosts of the dead, pursuing an existence the spectral counterpart of this

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—the form without the warmth and colour, the semblance without the life? Or is the life after death a bald monotony of perfected existence? Does the soul at death plunge into the ocean of immediate perfection, to endure eternally without the incentives that come through progress and the widening of knowledge? Surely this would be the practical extinction of individuality—its practical absorption into the undifferentiated soul of the universe; this would be to make heaven less interesting than earth, and the vision of God less stimulating There than Here. Such conceptions of life after death do not justly express the Christian faith, in which the continuance of personal identity is inseparable from the growth and

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progress of the soul. The meaning of Christ's coming into the world was to open to us the vision and experience of life fulfilling itself on ever broadening lines; life ever growing more abundant; joy ever deepening the strength and volume of its current. As we come into the experience of that life here, learning through Him to care for and to seek the better things, instinctively and by the moral and intellectual necessities of our nature we interpret joy and good in the terms of progress in character, in knowledge, in the service of God. Have we not intimations, in our best hours, of the endless possibility of moral development; of qualities of the soul that shall never cease to grow more worthy of Him Who implanted

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them ; of character fulfilling itself perpetually in line with a Divine Ideal ? Have we not suggestions, in those superb moments when the mind is at its best, of a larger intellectual development, a more comprehensive assimilation and use of knowledge, postponed for the present by imperious limitations of time ? Have we not visions of service, flung briefly open, like rifts in an encompassing cloud, at times when our spirit is most thoroughly obedient to God ; service the nature of which we cannot grasp because the vision is so brief, but the import of which we apprehend to be the doing of God's will, as it is done in heaven ! As the vision of such possibilities swept before Paul's mind, to be hidden again by earth's clouds,

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sin and overwork and the sorrow of unequal strength, well might he cry :
“ I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.”
What a wonderful characterisation of the possibilities and opportunities of this one life of ours, as it shall develop after death—*far better !* Very splendid are the possibilities and opportunities that open to us here ; sometimes we feel that no life could be broader or richer than this, and in our faithlessness we think of death as the shattering of a great career ; but they who enter into the faith of the Resurrection dare to anticipate something far better—better in its scope and range, better in its freedom from harassing liabilities and limitations, better in its opportunity for upbuilding character worthy of those

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that are called "the children of God."
"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,
neither have entered into the heart
of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him."

To the survival of personal identity and the growth of the soul must be added one other element, that from the beginning has marked the common faith of Christians: the Resurrection of the Body. By this, its most characteristic belief, Christianity becomes a noble mediator between two extreme views of personality. There is a view of personality, a very normal and human view, to which bodily reality is the only reality. The visible form, the expression of the face, the colour, the voice, the touch of the hand—these are personality;

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the warm, sweet actualities of life. And when these are swallowed up in the all-devouring grave there remains nothing but memory and sorrow. He Who wept at the grave of Lazarus His friend, can sympathise with those to whom the bodily side of personality is so real as this. There is another, a philosophical, view of personality, to which the body is nothing but the temporary dwelling in which the soul, the real person, lives for a little while, then abandons forever. This is the view that fills Indian thought; innumerable incarnations of the soul, which briefly tenants one body after another, escaping with joy from each miserable habitation. This is the view that condemns the body as the source of moral evil—the un-

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sanitary prison of the impatient soul. This is the view that conceives of our only real self as an immortal principle, liberated by death to enjoy its birthright of disembodied freedom. When one thinks of the malady, the pain, the possibilities of misuse, the weariness, the enfeebling changes that beset the mortal body, one can sympathise with the philosophical impulse to solve a difficult problem by consigning the body to oblivion.

Between these two extremes stands Christianity : a noble, compassionating mediator. It will not say that the body is all ; neither will it say that the body is nothing. To our passionate impulse to cling to the bodily manifestations of personality it answers : that this impulse is true and not false ;

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that the body is a part of personality and that our instinctive protest against the humiliation and wreckage of the body by death is a prophetic intimation of immortality. To our philosophical impulse to consign the body to oblivion because of its weakness, and to trust only to the continuance of an impaired, because a disembodied, self, Christianity points, in reply, to the Incarnation of the Son of God sanctifying and honouring our whole nature; and to His Uprising from the grave in the fullness of Personality, clothed upon with the glorious Body of His Resurrection. "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the First-fruits of them that slept." "It is sown in weakness, it

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is raised in power ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

Such is our faith concerning them that sleep in Him—a faith full of mystery ; knowing nothing of the mode but simply holding the fact ; a faith that consents to wait reverently until the Day of Explanation dawn, and the shadows of the grave flee away. It is that faith that makes sacred the resting-places of Christ's own. It is that faith that shall make us calm to endure the rending of our own personality in the last hour. " My flesh shall rest in hope." " For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and

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this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in Victory."

